



**Mediterranean Driftnet Campaign 2013**  
Final report – Strictly confidential



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## Executive summary



Citizen inspector Brady Bradshaw monitors fishing activity from the port of Aci Trezza, Sicily

Our oceans are dying. Overfishing and illegal fishing are persistent and truly global problems. Over-exploitation of the ocean's resources, in particular fish populations, threatens the marine biodiversity, endangered species and stands in the way of effective implementation of new conservation laws.

Far away from where enforcement officials can monitor effectively, fishing operations too often have a free hand. The Black Fish works to aid enforcement of fisheries regulations by training volunteers as 'citizen inspectors', flying unmanned aircraft and running sea-based patrols to increase the surveillance and documenting of suspected fishing operations.

In Europe the illegal use of driftnets is one of the most prolific examples of illegal practices carried out at sea. In both the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea the use of the nets is believed to be ongoing, despite a ban on their use. In the Mediterranean alone, over 500 ships are still using driftnets, killing an estimated 10.000 cetaceans every year, as well as thousands of endangered sharks and sea turtles.

### Investigating illegality

While some states ensure compliance, others fail to enforce fishing regulations effectively. Italy is a prime example, where in some ports a lack of control means fishermen operate almost with impunity, especially when it comes to the ongoing illegal use of driftnets. This serious case of non-compliance resulted in the European Commission threatening Italy with an infringement procedure, with possible legal action now following through the international courts, forcing Italian authorities to act or face international sanctions.

If this infringement case is to go ahead, more evidence and exposure is needed to ensure its success. The Black Fish started a new Mediterranean campaign in 2013, focused on collecting evidence of illegal driftnet use, in part to support the European Commission in its legal action and to help give the ongoing illegal fishing in European waters international media exposure.



One of the port inspection teams searching for a port in southern Tunisia

## The campaign team

The Black Fish set out with a team of 6 volunteers that were trained as 'citizen inspectors', 2 drone operators, 2 photo journalists, a documentary film crew, a logistical coordinator and a cook.

For a period of 2 months the team visited fishing ports across Italy, Albania and Tunisia. A total of 76 separate inspections were carried out in 56 different fishing ports, during day and night visits. Evidence was collected in the ports, from the air and at sea.



The main investigation team discussing tactics and planning ahead of a night inspection of ports along Sicily's east coast

### Finding driftnets

The volunteer inspectors found surprisingly few large driftnets, stacked up in the ports, as was observed in the past. Evidence of illegal driftnet use was however apparent in many ports by identifying equipment fitted to the ships and investigating storage units in the ports, where large nets were kept, hidden from view. Many of these units are not accessible enough for nets to be fully identified but some were found to contain driftnets.

Fishermen have taken a more cautious approach in recent years, hiding nets under tarpaulins or inside vessels. Their use however, is still evident.

### Evidence of related illegality

Table which shows evidence of related illegality that was observed and documented.

	Calabria (Italy)	Sicily (Italy)	Albania	Tunisia
Driftnets over legal length	X	X	✓	✓
Driftnets with large mesh size	X	X	✓	✓
Landing of undersized fish	X	✓	X	X
Dynamite fishing	X	✓	X	✓
Fishing without a quota	X	✓	X	X
Bycatch of threatened species	X	X	X	✓
Blacklisted ships still using driftnets	X	✓	X	X
Ships without ID	X	X	✓	X

Indications of dynamite fishing were observed during visits to Sicilian and Tunisian ports. In Sicily illegal landings of undersized tuna and swordfish were also documented. Although not technically illegal, by-catch of threatened species such as seahorses, sharks and turtles were found in driftnet and gill net fisheries in Tunisia. In Albania many ships operated without any identification markings.

### **Drones vs driftnets**

The Black Fish approach to conservation is in part about developing innovative solutions to the challenges faced when attempting to police the world's vast oceans. The Black Fish partnered with tech innovation NGO ShadowView to start building unmanned aircraft (also known as drones) to fly over coastal areas, in order to document fishing activity at sea quickly and cost-effectively.

This was the first time drones were ever used to monitor fishing operations. During six separate flights blacklisted vessels were filmed in ports and some ships were followed out to sea. The Black Fish is now working to development a long-range surveillance drone, allowing for aerial monitoring over a 70 mile radius.



A quadcopter drone launched outside the port of Sant Agata, on Sicily's north coast

### **Citizen-led fisheries control**

The 2013 Mediterranean campaign has given The Black Fish the unique ability to uncover illegal fishing activities in ports around the Mediterranean – which in Albania and Tunisia was a first for an NGO. Evidence of fishing crime was apparent in most regions visited, setting a course for a continued campaigning presence in the Mediterranean for the years to come.



Team members Wietse van der Werf and Brady Bradshaw setting up the campaign's 'map room'

The marine environment is in crisis. Wherever The Black Fish has worked on its fisheries investigations in recent years, widespread illegality was found.

The vision for the organisation is to build an international citizen-led enforcement network, using innovative technology and the power of community to ensure Europe's fishing industry is subjected to appropriate levels of control, scrutiny and enforcement.

This report gives a full overview of our activities and findings during this year's campaign. We believe it shows how a small group of people working on a focus investigative campaign such as this, has the potential to uncover environmental crime. With more structural support in future, it is our aim to expose threats to the marine life on an even larger scale.

## The driftnet issue

Illegal fishing is a major driver behind overfishing and destruction of the oceans. The global marine environment is in bad shape and overfishing is currently threatening the majority of commercially targeted species. It is estimated that if current levels of fishing continue, the danger exist of an overall collapse of all industrial fisheries globally by 2048 and the decimation of many marine species.

### Illegal nets

The illegal use of driftnets in the Mediterranean Sea is one of the most prolific examples of illegal fishing in Europe. The use of driftnets on the high seas has been banned by the United Nations for over 20 years and additionally by the European Union since 2002. It is estimated that approximately 500 vessels from Italy, Turkey, Morocco, Albania and Tunisia continue to use the nets illegally.

### Protecting Mediterranean biodiversity



Salina, one of the islands of the Aeolian Archipelago, in the Tyrrhenian Sea, is home to uniques species both on land and the surrounding seas

approximately 10.000 whales and dolphins are killed in the nets every year, within the Mediterranean region alone.

Illegal driftnet fishing has also been documented to take place within the Palagos Sanctuary, the first international Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the world, covering areas of the Mediterranean seas of France, Italy, and the Principality of Monaco. The Palagos Sanctuary covers an area known to be one of the major breeding grounds for endangered fin whales.



Blacklisted driftnet vessel Monella in the port of Porticello, Sicily

What makes the use of driftnets especially troublesome in the Mediterranean Sea is that the region is dubbed a biodiversity hotspot, being home to a high numbers of unique marine species. Its relatively shallow and warm waters make ideal spawning and breeding sites. Especially the Tyrrhenian Sea (west of Italy), Ligurian Sea (north of Corsica) and Adriatic Sea (between Italy and Croatia) are known to be major spawning sites for sharks and fish (such as swordfish and bluefin tuna).

The Mediterranean Sea is also home to important breeding grounds for cetaceans, including endangered fin whales, sperm whales, pilot whales, striped dolphins and common dolphins. The latest scientific research on the cetacean bycatch of driftnets estimated that

## Abuse of fishing subsidies



Vessels docked in the port of Riposto, Sicily, which is home to numerous vessels that have been blacklisted for illegal driftnet use after receiving subsidies to convert to other types of fishing gear

In recent years different organisations have uncovered the illegal use of driftnets and this evidence has led to increased pressure on those countries not complying with international regulations to clean up their act. While France finally clamped down on criminal driftnet activity along its Mediterranean coast after new measures were imposed in 2007, Italy has continued to harbor driftnet vessels to this day.

The EU has allocated over € 100 million in the last decade to encourage Italian fishermen to convert to different types of fishing gear. Some stopped using driftnets, while others sold them to Moroccan, Albanian or Tunisian fishermen, allowing for their illegal use to continue. The mis-use of EU fisheries subsidies by Italian driftnet fishermen has been widely published.

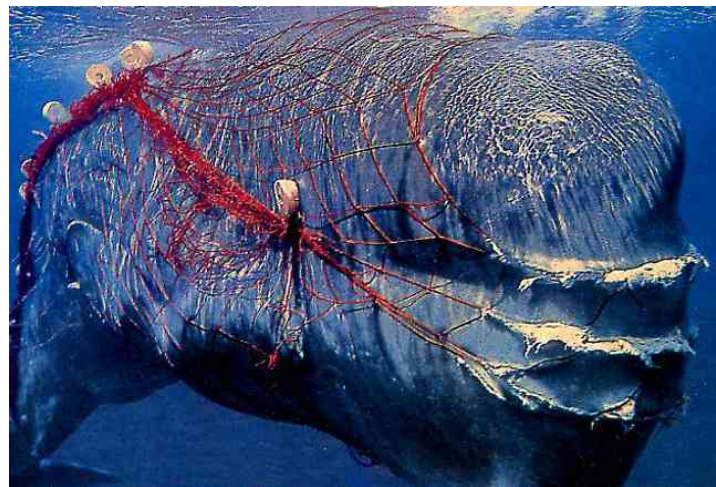
## Non-compliance

The illegal use of driftnets directly threatens the fragile marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea. The need to preserve this unique biodiversity is urgent and the illegal use of driftnets simply cannot be allowed to carry on.

The driftnet situation has become a serious issue of non-compliance which is putting into question the effectiveness of EU fisheries enforcement as a whole. For this reason the European Commission has initiated an infringement procedure, possibly leading to member state Italy taken to the international court over the of non-compliance on driftnet fishing. Political pressure on Italy is increasing but change is proving to be slow.

## Opportunities for change

With growing public awareness and increased media interest, there is now realistic potential in making the illegal use of driftnets in the Mediterranean Sea famous and controversial, in order to build the necessary political pressure to end their use for good.



A sperm whale entangled in a driftnet off the coast of Italy. Divers were able to release the animal from its entanglement. Photo by Alberto Romeo

# The campaign

## Our strategy

The strategy of The Black Fish campaign has been two-fold: to gather evidence of illegal driftnet fishing in a bid to aid prosecution, while at the same time using the investigation to bring much needed media exposure to the issue.

The inspectors gathered evidence, which is set to aid the European Commission and local fisheries enforcement organisations to take legal action against those breaking the law. It is our hope that increased evidence gathering in the Mediterranean region over the coming years can help secure successful prosecutions.

The Black Fish set out with a team of 6 investigators, 2 drone operators, 2 photo journalists, a documentary film crew, a logistical coordinator and a cook. For a period of 2 months the team visited fishing ports across Italy, Albania and Tunisia. A total of 76 separate inspections were carried out in 56 different fishing ports, during the day and at night. Driftnets were found in various ports but related illegality was also documented, prompting a broader approach wherever the team visited.

## Port inspections

The most direct way to monitor fishing activity from land is by inspecting activities in fishing ports. The Black Fish trained 6 people to act as 'citizen inspectors', documenting the movement of vessels, registering vessel registration numbers and their type of fishing technique, as well as observing possible landings of fish. Many of the nearby fish markets were also visited and where possible the transport to and from ports and fish markets followed, in order to track the movement of landed fish and the subsequent trading.

Now the investigation is finished, The Black Fish is preparing for a new round of training sessions, giving more people a chance to join the organisation as inspectors and obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to identify fishing techniques and infringements.



Inspecting the mesh size of a fishing net in the Tunisian port of Mahares



Investigator Brady Bradshaw looks at the head of an endangered bluefin tuna, displayed at the fish market in Riposto, Sicily



Looking out over the Sicilian port of Sant Agata





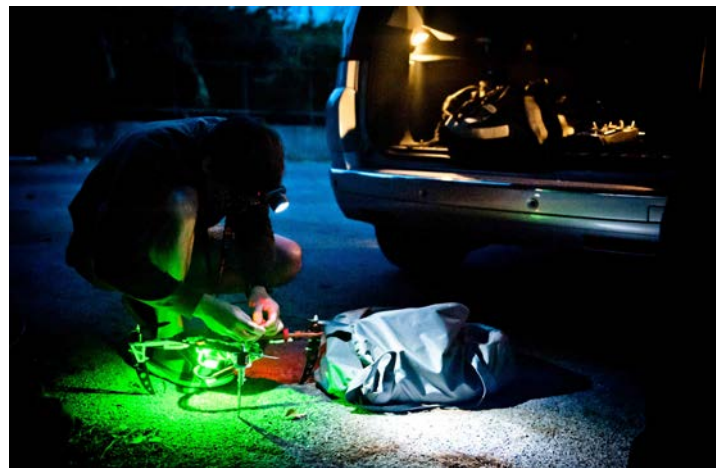
## Surveillance drones

This year was the first time ever for unmanned aircraft (also known as drones) to be deployed in the search for illegal fishing activities. The Black Fish partnered with the organisation ShadowView, which develops and supplies innovative solutions to help conservation organisations in their monitoring efforts.

Helicopter-like drones known as quadcopters were launched on six separate occasions during the investigation in Sicily. The aim of the drone deployment was to test the equipment in a campaign scenario and also demonstrate the potential that the innovative technology has in monitoring fishing activity from the skies. Blacklisted vessels were documented in ports with the quadcopters and some vessels were followed out to sea.

No direct evidence of illegality was obtained through the use of the drones, which can be attributed to the limited range of the quadcopters currently used. The Black Fish and ShadowView are now seeking funding for the purchase of a long-range surveillance drone, which could cover 50 to 70 miles of open sea, allowing for monitoring on a much larger scale.

The quadcopters were made available and operated by ShadowView. For more information about their work, see [www.shadowview.org](http://www.shadowview.org)



Drone pilot prepares the quadcopter for an early morning surveillance flight at the Sicilian port of Sant Agata



Two drone operatives joined the campaign from our partner-organisation ShadowView



## Sea patrols

During the campaign one sea patrol was carried out, between the islands of Salina and Filicudi, in the Aeolian Archipelago. The blacklisted vessel *Aliseo* was found off Filicudi, followed and nets were spotted onboard but could not be identified. Their overall length was estimated to be at least within legal driftnet size.

There is a major advantage to patrolling at sea as it gives unequalled ability to monitor fishing activity exactly where it is happening. Port inspections are very useful to investigate activities happening locally to a port but as soon as vessels leave for sea, staying on land is very limited. Ideally port inspections act as a way to gather intelligence on vessel movements, which can then be acted upon by a patrol vessel, that can follow fishing vessels out to sea.

The Black Fish is currently seeking funding for the purchase of a patrol vessel, to be deployed in both the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. The vessel will operate in close conjunction with drone surveillance and the growing team of port inspectors.

## Media coverage

Having a presence in the ports and documenting the illegal fishing effort creates a unique chance to give the wider public a direct insight into the issues, through media exposure and by publishing evidence. The campaign received attention in the media, with prominent reportages and articles by the BBC, The Guardian, Vice Magazine, ITV News, Greenpeace Magazine, Ny Tid Magazine and Le Point.

Canadian conservationist and film maker Emily Hunter joined the campaign with a documentary film crew. She is working on a new production named 'Activist 2.0', which features stories from a younger generation of environmental campaigners looking at new ways to affect change. Photo journalists Francesco Zizola, Chris Grodotzki and Nico Jankowski joined from Italy, Germany and The Netherlands.



Founder of The Black Fish Wietse van der Werf and photo journalist Chris Grodotzki during a patrol off the Italian island of Filicudi



The vessel *Aliseo* found off Filicudi with driftnets onboard



Media coverage of the driftnet campaign in Greenpeace Magazine (largest environmental focused magazine in Germany, independently-run from the organisation)

## Areas of focus

Areas around the Mediterranean where the investigation focused its efforts.

### Calabria, Italy

Investigation period: 6 June 2013  
Amount of inspectors: 2  
Number of ports inspected: 1

Calabria is the most Southern region of mainland Italy and one of the notorious 'hot spots' for illegal driftnet fishing. Fishermen in the coastal town of Bagnara Calabria are publically opposing the driftnet fishing restrictions and have found to break the regulations on numerous occasions in the past.

Recently fishermen, together with the local mayor, attempted to pressure responsible ministers in giving fishermen operating from the port an exemption from the driftnet restrictions. Their attempt failed as ministers refused to meet them but it is clear that fishermen in this port, well-known for its driftnets, are not likely to give up the fishing technique easily.

The port at Bagnara Calabria, set between huge cliffs and with only one road leading to it, is difficult to access. During the campaign an inspection was carried out but it was decided to focus on this port in future investigations. Re-visiting the port would require further preparations and more strict safety precautions.



The new coast guard fleet at Messina, which is tasked with patrolling the waters around Calabria but has never set sail since the ships were built over 2 years ago. It is rumoured that corruption within the *Guardia Costiera* has caused a shortage in the fleet's operational budget, meaning there is no money left for fuel.

### A note on the Calabrian mafia

Illegal fishing activity is often connected to the facilitation of other criminal activities, such as human trafficking or drug smuggling. Corruption in the Coast Guard operating in Calabria has been exposed by investigators in the past. The regional mafia, known as the 'Ndrangheta, is one of the most powerful of organised crime syndicates in Europe. The organisation is particularly known for extortion practices and drug trafficking.

Italian prosecutors recently concluded that the 'Ndrangheta now runs the largest cocaine smuggling operation in Europe – from Calabria. The organisation's criminal activities are estimated to add up to a staggering 3% of Italy's total GDP. Though not proven directly, it is fair to assume that the 'Ndrangheta's strong rooted presence in Calabria means that fishing ports could be facilitating the transport of narcotics.



## Sicily, Italy

Investigation period: 27 May – 21 June 2013  
 Amount of inspectors: 6  
 Number of ports inspected: 20

Fishermen on the island of Sicily have traditionally used driftnets in areas all around the island. Sicilian culture is conservative and traditional, with strong opposition to 'outsiders' bringing change. This is one of the reasons why change on the driftnet issue has proven slow.

Over the last 10 years different organisations have worked in Sicily to document the illegal use of driftnets, most notably Oceana and Greenpeace. The use of the nets was documented to be widespread, especially in ports along the north and east coasts.

This year investigators found evidence of driftnet use but not to the same extent as was uncovered in previous years. Fishermen are clearly more careful, hiding nets and covering parts of their vessels. Enforcement has been stepped up in certain ports and regions, but it is not clear if this has resulted in an actual decline in driftnet use.

### Local corruption

Corruption amongst local coast guard officials, who are responsible for fisheries enforcement in Italy, has been known to take place for years. During the campaign, many local people and Italian journalists spoke of this.

In the past, confiscated fish or fishing equipment has been found to be sold back to the same fishermen it was confiscated from. Also fines are often too low to form any meaningful deterrent from further infringement.

Our investigators reported that all ports in Sicily were friendly, with fishermen openly starting dialogue and with good ability to document any activity. All Italian ports are publicly accessible. During a four week period 20 ports were inspected during 41 separate visits.



Vessels in the Sicilian port of Riposto, blacklisted for having used illegal driftnets in the past



Fishing nets in the port of Stazzo, Sicily



The bustling port of Riposto, Sicily



## Albania

Investigation period: 21 June – 27 June 2013  
Amount of inspectors: 2  
Number of ports inspected: 9

Traditionally Albania is not thought to be involved in large scale driftnet fishing. However, in April 2013 a shipment of large driftnets was spotted leaving Italy, headed for Albania. Italian coastguard also confiscated driftnet gear during a similar attempted shipment later.

With increased controls, Italian fishermen seem keen to move their operations to countries outside of the EU, such as Albania, which is closest from the Italian mainland.

### Day inspections

The investigators found surprisingly few driftnet ships in the Albanian ports. Some evidence pointed to driftnet use but illegal nets were spotted on only two occasions.

For security reasons it was decided to focus on day inspections only, leaving out the possibility to witness landings of fish at night or very early in the morning. Most ports were only visited once and found to be only partly full, with ships still believed to be out at sea.

This initial investigation gives The Black Fish a unique insight into the fishing activity from Albanian ports. We are now looking at options for increased monitoring of ports found to host illegal fishing activity.

As far as we are aware The Black Fish is the first organisation to make detailed inspections of all Albanian fishing ports. Two investigators visited the country for a period of one week, inspecting 9 ports during 10 separate visits.

They found friendly locals, ports that were relatively easy to access but also a military presence around a couple of the ports, which made access more difficult on those occasions.



Trawlers in the Albanian port of Vlore, where large illegal driftnets were found to be stored onboard



A large driftnet onboard a trawler in Vlore, Albania



Large unidentified nets covered under tarpaulin onboard a trawler in the port of Sarande, Albania



## Tunisia

Investigation period: 12 July – 27 July 2013  
Amount of inspectors: 4  
Number of ports inspected: 26

The reason to choose Tunisia as a focus for the second part of the campaign was similar to the reasons for choosing Albania; indications pointed to Italian fishermen operating from Tunisian ports, in a bid to escape scrutiny from European fisheries inspectors.

Detailed inspections of Tunisian fishing ports were made along the full length of the country's coastline. Ports in the north and middle of the country were all found to be friendly, with fishermen easily engaged in conversation. Further south the inspections posed some challenges.

Fishermen responded differently to woman being present in the ports and some suspicion was raised by westerners making detailed photos of fishing nets and measuring their mesh sizes. In the port of Zarzis fishermen set off dynamite while the inspectors were in the port, joking they were just 'playing around'.

### Bycatch of threatened species

In Tunisia bycatch of threatened species was documented, including sea horses, juveline sharks and an endangered loggerhead turtle.

Four investigators visited the country for a period of two weeks, inspecting 26 ports during 27 separate visits. Illegal nets were found and various others types of illegality observed. The Black Fish is assessing the possibility to return to Tunisia for a more focused investigation in the ports where illegality was found.



Checking mesh sizes of nets in the port of Salakta, Tunisia



Tuna at a fishing market in Sfax, Tunisia



Evidence of sea horses caught as bycatch in trawling fisheries off the south Tunisian coast



## Collected evidence

This section gives an overview of the illegality observed and documented during the investigation. Relevant evidence is forwarded to the European Commission, local enforcement organisations and other conservation organisations.

### Driftnets

Different types of driftnets were spotted in all of the countries where the investigation focused its attention. Detailed identification of nets was made more difficult by the fact that nets were often covered, stored in locked storage units or hidden inside the hold of vessels.

It is apparent that fishermen are increasingly using the nets opportunistically by bringing them onboard just before the vessel is to set sail or only taking the net from inside the vessel once at sea.

Driftnets are also not stored in the open on the docks to the extent that was documented 5-8 years ago. Stricter enforcement in some areas and increased scrutiny through media exposure and NGO campaigns is making fishermen more careful.



Driftnets on a vessel in Sant Agata, Sicily



Various smaller driftnets stored on the same vessel. *Aurora* / 6MZ 525 has been found to break the rules in the past and the combined lengths of its current nets greatly exceed the legal limit

## Exploiting the loopholes

One aspect of driftnet use which was clearly identified is the use of multiple nets onboard the same vessel, which can be tied together once at sea. The overall length of a net cannot exceed 2,5 kilometers but regulations do allow fishermen to carry various nets on the same vessel. Our port inspections found that this loophole was widely exploited, with the combined lengths of nets onboard specific vessels greatly exceeding the legal limits.

An example of this was recorded in the Sicilian port of Sant Agata, where the previously blacklisted vessel *Aurora* was on multiple occasions seen to move nets on and off the vessel or stack up to 5 different driftnets on its aft deck before heading out to sea.

## Blacklisted ships still using driftnets

Throughout the investigation various blacklisted ships were identified in the ports, with some suspected to still use driftnets. While new infringements could not be detected onboard these specific ships, they have been found to break the rules in the past and should be a focal point for any future investigations.

Acqua Marina Seconda (pictured), a vessel primarily registered to use longline, still uses driftnets as its secondary fishing gear. This specific vessel received over € 35,000 in EU subsidies in 2002 as part of a driftnets reconversion plan.



Blacklisted vessel *Acqua Marina II* / CA 3992, repainted and re-registered as *Acqua Marina Seconda* / CA 617. Docked in Riposto, Sicily

Confiscated driftnets at the Italian coast guard base stationed at the port of Milazzo, Sicily





## Landing of undersized fish

During night inspections in the Sicilian ports of Sant Agata and Aci Trezza our port inspectors witnessed the landing of juvenile tuna and swordfish. Documenting this type of illegality is difficult as it requires to be on the dock at the exact same time when fishing vessels land their catches.

Vessels were also found to offload catches in different ports to where they are supposed to be based. Some fishermen land in the morning while others do so in the evening or in the middle of the night. It is also rumoured that fishermen land their fish on beaches and quiet areas of coastline to avoid detection or inspection but this was not witnessed by our investigators.

## Fishing without a quota

To catch certain types of species, such as bluefin tuna, vessels need to have individually allocated quotas. If fishermen without such a quota accidentally catch a bluefin tuna they are supposed to report this to the local control authority, which often isn't done. It is difficult to document this type of infringement as it requires one to be present when the fishermen land their fish.

In Aci Trezza investigators recorded the landing of tuna by a vessel at night. The longline vessel *Beautiful* (4CT1120) was found to land bluefin tuna, even though it has no allocated quota. When approached the fishermen pressed the investigators why they were there, while quickly loading the catch into a truck at the end of dark and non-illuminated dock.

## Dynamite fishing

Bent fish are an indication that they may have been 'caught' using explosives, with the sudden impact from the dynamite deforming the bodies of the fish. In Tunisia the investigators found evidence pointing to dynamite fishing in three separate ports. In the ports of Qusaybat al Madyun and Gabes, located in the middle of the country, bent fish was sold.

In Zarzis, which is located a lot further south, explosives were used inside the port when investigators were present but the exact area of the blasts was not accessible, which unfortunately meant no evidence could be collected. Bent fish was also spotted in the port of Riposto, Sicily.



A juvenile swordfish sold to locals in the port of Sant Agata, Sicily, from purse seine vessel *San Calogero* / 6MZ528



Video still showing bluefin tuna onboard the longline vessel *Beautiful* / 4CT 1120. Juvenile tuna were observed among the larger individuals

## By-catch of threatened species

All types of driftnet or similar gill net fishing in the Mediterranean involve the catching of other non-targeted species (bycatch). It is not always as easy to document this as fishermen often sort their catches onboard and will discard bycatch overboard while still at sea.

In Tunisia bycatch of various threatened species was documented in gill nets and driftnets. In the port of Zarzis fishermen were found eating a loggerhead sea turtle, caught and gutted only just before.

Juvenile sharks were also found trapped in gill nets and a trawler had buckets full of sea horses on its deck, which were caught as bycatch during bottom trawl fishing.

### Sea grass

Posidonia (also known as Mediterranean tapeweed) was found entangled in many of the gill nets found stored in different Tunisian ports. The grass is vital in providing a healthy biodiversity on the Mediterranean sea bed, especially for smaller species such as sea horses. It gets ripped up from the sea bed by the nets which target smaller demersal species (those living on or near the sea bed).

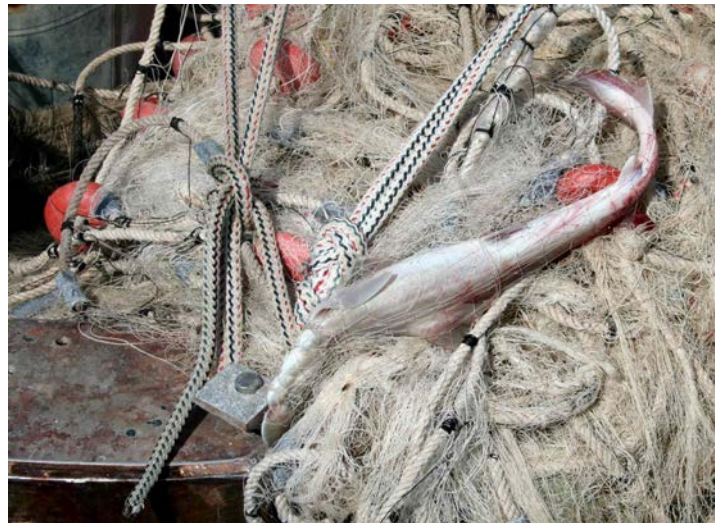
## Ships without identification

In Albania investigators found the majority of vessels in certain ports to be unmarked, without names or registration numbers. Some vessels believed to have originated from Italy were also unmarked, making it difficult to determine exactly where they come from.

A discarded bluefin tuna head in the port of Porticello, Sicily



An endangered loggerhead turtle, caught in a gill net or driftnet and eaten by the fishermen in the port of Zarzis,



Juvenile shark entangled in a gill net in the port of Zarzis, Tunisia



## Full port inspection list

This is a full list of all port inspections carried out by The Black Fish crew during the Mediterranean Driftnet Campaign 2013.

### Calabria, Italy

Name of port	Date visited	Inspection type	Fishing activity	Evidence found	Comments
Bagnara Calabria	06/06/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Driftnet	n/a	Could not access the port

### Sicily, Italy

Name of port	Date visited	Inspection type	Fishing activity	Evidence found	Comments
Milazzo	31/05/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Driftnet, Longline	No evidence of illegal driftnets, though various vessels outfitted for driftnets	
Tonnarella	31/05/2013	Day inspection	-	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
San Gregorio Bagnoli	31/05/2013	Day inspection	-	Blacklisted vessel <i>Giove</i> in the port but no evidence of illegal driftnets	
Sant Agata	31/05/2103	Day inspection	Purse Seine, Trawl, Driftnet, Longline	<b>Blacklisted vessel <i>Aurora</i> in the port with multiple driftnets onboard</b>	
Acquedolci	31/05/2013	Day inspection	-	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Falcone	31/05/2013	Day inspection	-	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Santo Stefano	31/05/2013	Day inspection	-	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	

Tusa	31/05/2013	Day inspection	Gill net	Multiple large gill nets stored along the port, no evidence of illegal driftnets	
Cefalú	31/05/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	<b>Various driftnet vessels with large nets onboard</b>	
Termini Immerese	31/05/2013	Day inspection	Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnets, various nets stacked along the port	Fishermen unloading driftnet from vessel onto pallets
Porticello	31/05/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Driftnet	<b>Multiple nets stored under covers in an inaccessible part of the port, thought to be driftnets</b>	
Sant Agata	01/06/2013	Evening / night inspection	Purse Seine, Trawl, Driftnet, Longline	<b>Blacklisted vessel <i>Aurora</i> in the port with multiple driftnets onboard</b>	No vessels leaving the port, rough seas
Giardini Naxos	02/06/2013	Day inspections		No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Riposto	02/06/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnets but five black-listed vessels in the port	
Pozzillo	02/06/2013	Day inspection		No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Stazzo	02/06/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnets but one black-listed vessel in the port	
S Maria la Scala	02/06/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Gill net	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	

Aci Trezza	02/06/2013	Day inspection	Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	<b>One ship believed to carry an illegal driftnet but could not be confirmed</b>	
Aci Castello	02/06/2013	Day inspection		No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Ognina	02/06/2013	Day inspection	Purse seine	No evidence of illegal driftnets, various nets stacked	
Vila Castillo	02/06/2013	Day inspection			
Catania	02/06/2013	Day inspection	n/a	n/a	Port not accessible
Salina - Filicudi	03/06/2013	Sea patrol	Gill net, Driftnet	Blacklisted vessel <i>Aliseo</i> spotted off Filicudi with driftnets onboard though estimated to be within legal size	
Sant Agata	05/06/2013	Night / day inspection	Purse Seine, Trawl, Driftnet, Longline	<b>Undersized swordfish landing documented</b>	
Aci Trezza	06/06/2013	Night inspection	Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	Various tuna and swordfish landed at night
Riposto	07/06/2013	Night inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Pozillo	07/06/2013	Night inspection		No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Stazzo	07/06/2013	Night inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
S Maria la Scala	07/06/2013	Night inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	Bluefin tuna landings at night
Pozillo	08/06/2013	Night inspection		No evidence of illegal driftnet use	

Riposto	08/06/2013	Night inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	Blacklisted vessels <i>Alessio</i> and <i>CA617</i> leave the port to go fishing
S Maria la Scala	08/06/2013	Night inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Stazzo	09/06/2013	Night inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
S Maria la Scala	09/06/2013	Night inspection	Longline, Gill net, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Riposto	09/06/2013	Night inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	Blacklisted vessels <i>Acqua Maria Seconda</i> , <i>Monella</i> and <i>Alessio</i> docked in the port. Small swordfish documented at fish market, believed to be undersized0
Ognina	10/06/2013	Night inspection	Purse seine		
Riposto	10/06/2013	Night inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill net, Longline, Driftnet		
Aci Trezza	11/06/2013	Night inspection	Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	<b>Landing of undersized tuna documented</b>	Documented undersized tuna landed by vessel <i>Beautiful</i> , 4CT1120
Aci Trezza	14/06/2013	Day inspection	Gill net, Longline, Driftnet	<b>Driftnet with too large mesh size found</b>	Blacklisted vessel <i>Ross Lucy</i> , 3CT482 in the port

## Albania

Name of port	Date visited	Inspection type	Fishing activity	Evidence found	Comments
Rruga Currila	22/06/2013	Day inspection	Gill Net	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Durres	22/06/2013	Evening inspection	-	n/a	First attempt to enter the port, turned away by Port Authority
Durres	23/06/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Gill Net	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Sjengjin	23/06/2013	Day inspection	Driftnet	<b>Large driftnets spotted on board vessel</b>	Various Italian vessels docked in the port, which is next to military complex
Vlore	25/06/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Gill Net	<b>Large driftnets spotted on board vessel</b>	
Porto Palermo	25/06/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Fish Farming	No evidence of driftnets	Various Italian vessels docked in the port
Orikum	25/06/2013	Day inspection	-	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Sarande	25/06/2013	Evening inspection	Trawl, Gill Net, Driftnet	Evidence of vessels outfitted for driftnet use, though no nets found	Port next to military complex. Various Greek and Italian vessels docked
Vlore	26/06/2013	Day inspection	None	n/a	Turned out to be a ferry port
Himare	26/06/2013	Day inspection	Gill Net	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	

## Tunisia

Name of port	Date visited	Inspection type	Fishing activity	Evidence found	Comments
Tabarka	14/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Lobster Cages, Coral Harvesting	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Bizerte (Darsena)	14/07/2013	Evening inspection	Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Lobster cages, Coral Harvesting, Angling	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Bizerte (Darsena)	15/07/2013	Day inspection	Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Lobster cages, Coral Harvesting, Angling	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Bizerte (fishing port)	15/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Lobster cages, Coral Harvesting, Driftnets	Evidence of driftnets use but no nets found	
Cap Zebib	15/07/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Gill Net, Lobster Cages	One suspected driftnet vessel found but no nets in sight	
Ghar el Mehl	15/07/2013	Evening inspection	Purse Seine, Gill Net, Lobster Pots, Driftnets	<b>Illegal driftnets documented</b>	
Tunis 'La Goulette'	15/07/2013	Evening inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Lobster pots	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Kelibia	16/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Fish Traps	No evidence of driftnets, except for smaller discarded nets	



Beni Khiar	16/07/2013	Evening inspection	Longline, Gill Net, Lobster Pots, Fish Farming	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Hergla	17/06/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Fish Farming	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Sousse	17/07/2013	Evening inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Lobster Pots	No evidence of driftnets but by-catch of sea sponges sold in the port	
Monastir	18/07/2013	Evening inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Lobster Ports, Fish Farming, Gill Net, Driftnets	<b>Various illegal driftnets found stored on the docks, possibly not in regular use anymore</b>	
Sayada	19/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Seine Fishing, Gill Net, Longline, Fish Traps	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Qusaybat al Madyun	19/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Lobster cages, Dynamite fishing, Fish Farming, Gill Net, Driftnets	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	Evidence observed pointing to dynamite fishing
Teboulba	19/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Seine Fishing, Gill Nets, Longline, Fish Farming	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Bekalta	19/07/2013	Evening inspection	Purse Seining, Gill Nets	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Mahdia	19/07/2013	Evening inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill Net, Longlines, Fish traps	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Salakta	20/07/2013	Day inspection	Gill nets	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
La Chebba	20/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill Net, Fish Farming	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Sfax	20/07/2013	Evening inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Fish traps	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	

Mahares	21/07/2013	Day inspection	Purse Seine, Longline, Fish traps, Gill Net, Angling	No evidence of illegal driftnet use	
Gabes	22/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Gill Net, Dynamite, Driftnets	<b>Various illegal driftnets found stored on the docks and on the vessels</b>	Evidence observed pointing to dynamite fishing
Houmt Souk	23/07/2013	Day inspection	Purse Seine, Longline, Gill Net, Driftnets, Lobster Pots, Angling	<b>Various illegal driftnets found stored on the docks and on the vessels</b>	
Zarzis	23/07/2013	Day inspection	Trawl, Purse Seine, Longline, Lobster Pots, Dynamite, Gill Net, Driftnet	<b>Various illegal driftnets found stored on the docks and on the vessels</b>	Evidence observed pointing to dynamite fishing
Port el Ketef	23/07/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Gill Net, Lobster Pots	<b>Various illegal driftnets found stored on the docks and on the vessels</b>	
Jarbah Ajim	24/07/2013	Day inspection	Longline, Gill Net, Driftnet, Lobster Pots	Evidence of small scale driftnet use	

## In conclusion

The conclusions which can be drawn from the campaign.

### Driftnet use continues

The most obvious conclusion which can be drawn from the campaign is that although the use of driftnets in the Mediterranean might have decreased some in the last decade, their use continues, operated by a few which are persistently breaking the rules. Corruption at enforcement level in certain regions and the lack of penalties which act as a strong deterrent both add to a situation in which fishermen have a free hand. Especially at sea monitoring and enforcement is inadequate, with vessels operating under relatively little to no scrutiny.

### Hidden illegality



Fishermen in the port of Sant Agata, Sicily, remove nets from their vessel

Commission, which, especially in Italy, is resulting in an increase in enforcement efforts in some regions. However, The Black Fish crew still documented various locations where ships were clearly outfitted for driftnet use and evidence was found of their continued use in all the countries where the investigators visited.

### Uncovering related issues

Many other examples of illegality were uncovered during the campaign. These are often related to the use of driftnets such as the evidence of bycatch, ships operating without identification markings or the landing of undersized fish. Other cases are less related directly to driftnet fishing, though these findings should be documented and analysed to the same extent as that of illegal driftnet use.



An illegal driftnet hidden under a tarpaulin onboard a trawler in the port of Sjingjin, Albania

Large numbers of illegal driftnets displayed openly in the ports as were observed in the past weren't found during the investigation. Many ships have the ability to keep nets stored away in their holds and most ports have large storage units which can be accessed straight from the docks, where nets could easily be kept. Different road transports of nets were observed in Sicily, where nets would be put onboard vessels only just before heading out to sea.

Fishermen are clearly more careful and pro-active at hiding their illegal activities. This can in part be attributed to high-profile campaigning by conservation NGOs in the past and increased pressure by the European

It is the overall fishing effort and its various acts of illegality which threatens the Mediterranean biodiversity. None of the activities stand on their own, with often the same ports, ships, companies and local authorities involved.

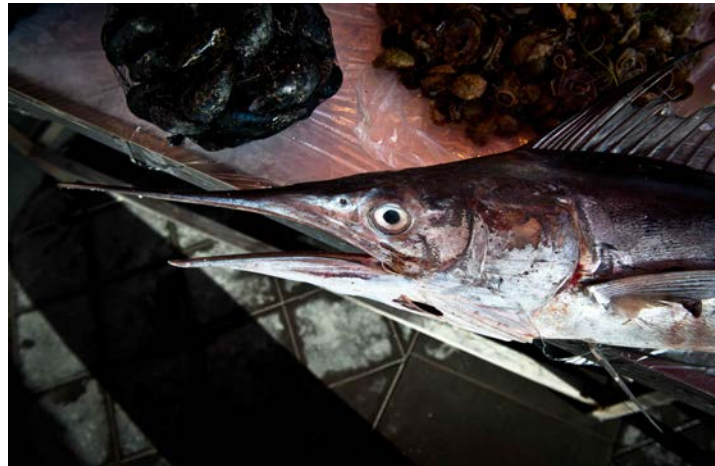
### Limitations

During the campaign investigators experienced various challenges. First of all it was generally hard to document open driftnet use as fishermen have become more careful at displaying their nets. Various nets were kept stored under tarpaulin or investigators observed nets being stored in the holds of a vessel, where in the past nets tended to be kept openly displayed on deck.

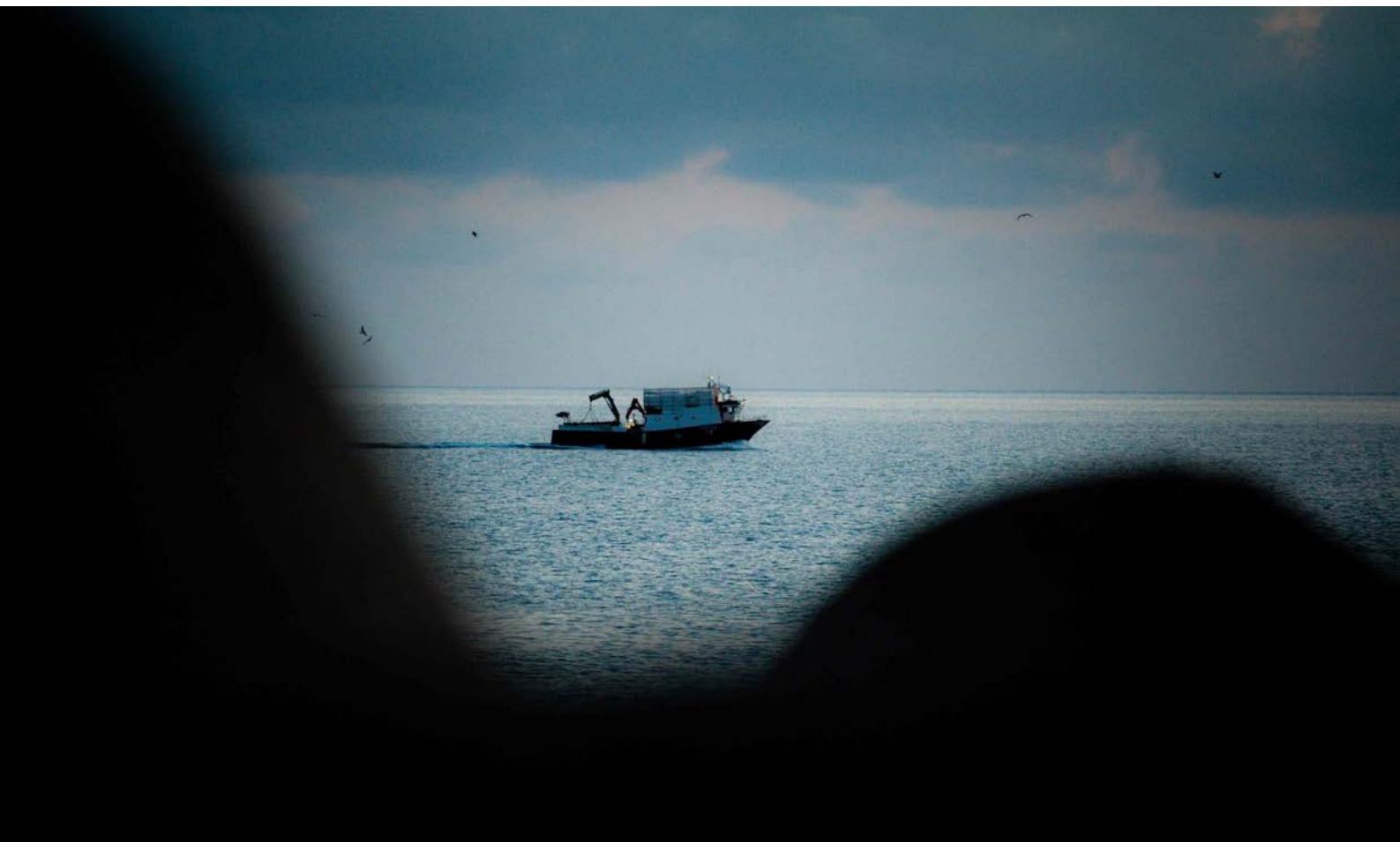
There is also increased evidence to suggest that in recent years fishermen have started landing illegally caught fish at beaches and remote coastal areas, to avoid detection or inspection upon returning to port.

Simply put it is increasingly difficult to effectively monitor fishing activity from the ports alone. The limitations of driving from port to port, while fishing boats can move easily along the coast, is one example of such limitations. There is great value in port inspections to uncover aspects of illegal fishing but there would be an ever greater advantage if findings or suspicions could be acted upon more directly by monitoring activity at sea.

Fishing vessel out at sea, Sant Agata, Sicily



Sail fish caught by longline at a fish market in Riposto, Sicily



## Looking to the future

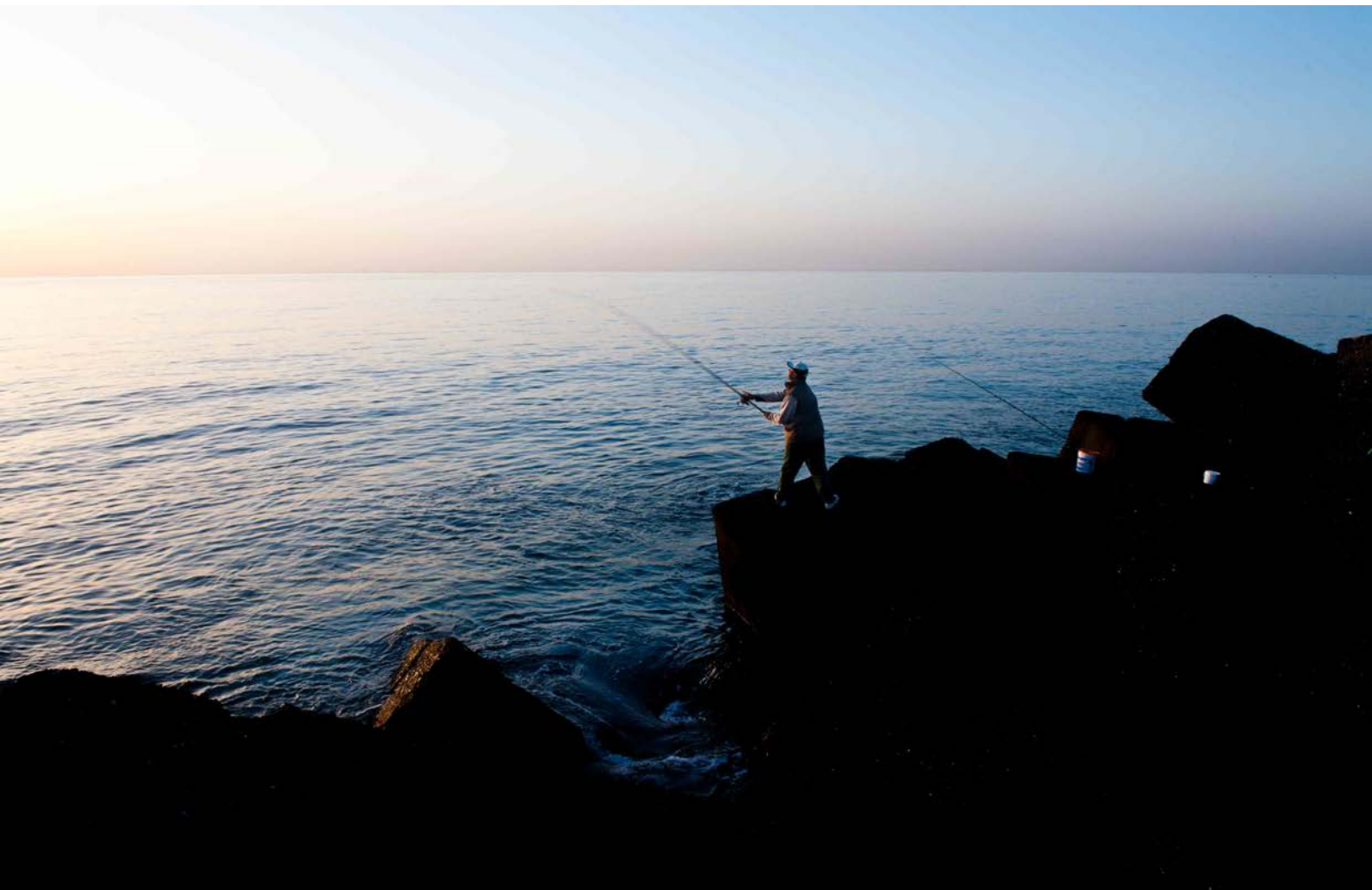
The ability to follow vessels out to sea and monitor their activities at the fishing grounds where they fish, would make a profound difference. The Black Fish is currently seeking funds for the purchase of a patrol vessel and long-range surveillance drone. Both will allow for monitoring on a larger scale, covering hundreds of miles of open sea. Patrolling fishing grounds will result in the direct surveillance of fishing operations. Furthermore the organisation is preparing for a new round of training sessions, enabling more people to join the campaign as citizen inspectors and ensuring that our work at sea can be readily informed by activity observed in the fishing ports.

Increased presence in Europe's fishing ports and fishing grounds at sea will result in much needed exposure and scrutiny for an industry that has thus far operated in relative obscurity. 85% of fishing populations in European waters are believed to be overfished. The marine environment is in bad shape.

The Black Fish is committed to further uncover and expose ongoing illegality in Europe's fishing industry and will steadily step up its investigation efforts in the Mediterranean over the coming years. Additional focus will lie on overfishing and illegal fishing practices in the Baltic Sea. The investigators will return to the Mediterranean next year and broaden their scope in terms of locations, while focusing more closely on ports where illegality was uncovered this year.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this report and will consider partnering with us to realise future campaigns.

Angler at the port of Stazza, Sicily



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our funders for their trust, patience and financial support to make our work possible.



**patagonia**



Special thanks goes out to the investigators who dedicated their time to join the campaign and ensure we got our evidence. Your involvement and dedication is what makes this organisation tick. A further thank you to the locals who supported our work most directly on the ground by helping find accommodation and transport options.

We acknowledge the invaluable support from colleagues at Oceana, Pew and Greenpeace who have been instrumental in providing us with information and guidance.

Finally we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our supporters who helped fund this campaign and continue to help make our work possible by spreading the word on our programmes and more generally on the need for action to preserve our oceans.



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